

SIDS and Foster Parents

Nothing in the world can prepare you for the unexpected death of a baby in your care. When the death is due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), not only is the death unexpected, it is also not possible to explain why the baby died. As a foster parent, you have cared for your tiny ward 24 hours a day. So it is not surprising that you feel a great sense of loss and grief for the baby as if it were your own.

Your crisis is complicated. You probably had to deal with the initial trauma of finding and trying to revive the baby, and calling for emergency help. In the middle of all that you still had to take care of the other children in your care, including your own. The period after the crisis can be especially hard. You will experience many feelings. You may question your ability to care for other infants and wonder if there was anything that you could have done to prevent the death of the baby. Since the baby is a ward of the State, you may not be able to attend the funeral services. This can add to the confusion and anxiety. If you are in contact with the birth parents, that also may add to the emotional burden that follows a SIDS death.

The investigation into the death of a baby in foster care is intense. Besides the coroner, more than likely, you may be questioned by the Social Services Agency that placed the baby with you and the agency that issued your license. You may or may not have other foster children in your care taken away.

The staff of the California SIDS Program understands how difficult it can be to cope with a SIDS death. We are here to help the families and other care takers of SIDS victims. We would like to offer our services to you. There are other foster parents who have experienced the same loss as you and are willing to talk with you and help you through this time of need. Please contact us if you would like more information about SIDS and/or assistance in locating your community's SIDS support group.



Produced by the California SIDS Program under funding by the California Department of Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Branch

California SIDS Program
3164 Gold Camp Drive, Suite 220
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6052
916-266-7437 • 800-369-SIDS (7437) • FAX 916-266-7439
info@californiasids.com • www.californiasids.com

